

UPDATE^{ST.}LUCIE

A monthly update from the St. Lucie County Board of County Commissioners

September 2016

Free Tree Giveaway Sept. 17

The St. Lucie County Extension Office and Keep Port St. Lucie Beautiful will be giving away free trees as part of the fall "Give a Tree: Spread the Shade Tree Giveaway" on Saturday, Sept. 17 from 7 a.m. – 10 a.m. at the Port St. Lucie Botanical Garden, 2410 SE Westmoreland Ave. Since quantities are limited; the event will be on a first-come, first-serve basis. In addition to getting a free tree, residents will visit the following educational stations: Right Plant, Right Place; Fertilizing; Watering; Pests; Diseases; Pruning or Planting. For more information contact the St. Lucie County Extension Office at 772-462-1660 or Keep Port St. Lucie Beautiful at 772-873-6312.

Catch 'em All at the Oxbow

Come discover the Oxbow Eco-Center's 225-acre nature preserve while catching Eevees, Magikarp and more, as St. Lucie County's environmental learning center hosts a free Pokémon Safari on Saturday, Sept. 10 from 2 – 3:30 p.m. Explore on your own or take a guided hike to not only catch Pokémon, but learn about the many native species in our area. Several guided hikes will be offered, but space is limited and will be filled on a first-come; first-serve basis. The Oxbow Eco-Center is located at 5400 NE St. James Drive, Port St. Lucie. For more information call the staff at 772-785-5833 or visit www.oxboweco.com.

Temporarily Suspension of Lifeguards at South Beach Park

Lifeguard coverage at South Beach Park will be temporarily suspended. St. Lucie County's Marine Safety Patrol Division has experienced a decrease in the number of staff, causing the temporarily discontinuance of providing weekend lifeguards at South Beach Park. Located at 800 South Ocean Drive, the beach access will remain open. However, lifeguards will not be on duty, until additional staff is hired.

Temporarily Closure of Bear Pointe Sanctuary

The fishing pier, crabbing dock and bird-observation tower at Bear Point Sanctuary is currently closed for repairs until further notice. Located at 2601 South Ocean Drive, Bear Point features more than 13 acres that are part of the Great Florida Birding Trail and is a popular spot for fishermen. For up-to-date information call 772-462-1692.

Recycling Right Earns St. Lucie County Top 5 Spot Statewide

Recycling efforts in St. Lucie County increased in the past year, earning the county's Solid Waste Department a Top 5 ranking statewide. St. Lucie County's recycling rate for 2015 was 54 percent compared to 37 percent in 2014. The county ranked fourth in the state behind Charlotte County at 59 percent; Brevard and Martin at 58 percent; and Sarasota and Collier at 56 percent. Thanks to all of those that have recycled right. For more details visit: www.stlucieco.gov/recycling.

Upcoming Meetings and Events

- ◆ The Treasure Coast Research Park is now hosting a weekly Farm-to-Fork Fresh Market, every Tuesday from 3 to 6 p.m., featuring locally grown products. The park is located at 2199 South Rock Road, Fort Pierce. For details call 772-359-8922.
- ◆ St. Lucie County Commissioners will hold the Preliminary FY 2016-17 Budget Hearing on Thursday, Sept. 8 at 6 p.m. and the Final Budget Hearing on Thursday, Sept. 22 at 6 p.m. in the Commission Chambers of the County Administration Complex, Roger Poitras Annex, 2300 Virginia Ave., Fort Pierce.

QUICK STATS

Building Permits:

- ◆ Building permit activity was up by 5.57% for July 2016 vs. July 2015. Revenue was up significantly by 29.58% for that same timeframe.

New Businesses:

- ◆ Through the Business Tax Receipt and associated Zoning Compliance process, St. Lucie County has tracked 6 new businesses opening in July with 48 new jobs. Year-to-date, there have been 55 new businesses totaling 218 jobs.

Unemployment Rate:

- ◆ St. Lucie's unemployment rate for July was 6.2% up from June's 5.9%, but down from 7.1% a year ago. The unemployment statewide was 4.7%. The largest job gains on the Treasure Coast were in Edu/Health (1,600), Leisure/Hospitality (1,400) and Professional Services (800).

Home Sales:

- ◆ The average median home sale price in St. Lucie County was \$183,000 in July (up 13% from \$162,000 in 2015) with 96.7% selling at the listed price. Condo sales in the county averaged out at \$131,950 (down 18% from last year's \$162,500) with 95% selling at the listed price, according to the Realtors of St. Lucie County.

Bed Tax Collection:

- ◆ Bed tax collections for June 2016 increased by 17% vs. 2015.